

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 040512

FOR SUDDARTH FROM NEA/ARN CAROLAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, JO, US

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN VISA POLICY RE AMERICAN CITIZENS

REF: A) SUDDARTH LETTER TO CAROLAN DATED FEB. 15
B) 75 AMMAN 5364

1. REF A HAD HARDLY ARRIVED WHEN WE LEARNED OF YET ANOTHER
INSTANCE, THE SECOND IN RECENT WEEKS, OF AMCITS ENCOUNTER-
ING DIFFICULTIES OBTAINING JORDANIAN VISAS APPARENTLY
BECAUSE OF THEIR JEWISH FAITH.

2. EARLIER INSTANCE IN JANUARY INVOLVED SEVERAL JEWISH
PARTICIPANTS IN AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND AMERICAN
JEWISH COMMITTEE STUDY TOUR, WHICH VISITED AMMAN FEB. 13
TO 15. JORDANIAN CONSULATE AT NEW YORK HAD DECLINED TO
ISSUE THEIR VISAS DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS FROM APPLICANTS
AND ULTIMATELY RETURNED THEIR PASSPORTS WITHOUT VISAS.
VISAS WERE FINALLY ISSUED MANY DAYS LATER, AND ONLY AFTER
WE HAD INTERCEDED WITH JORDANIAN CONSULATE THROUGH
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AMBASSADOR SALAH IN WASHINGTON.

3. ON FEB. 22, WE WERE INFORMED BY TWA'S LOS ANGELES
OFFICE THAT TWO MEMBERS (MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH SPIELBERGER)

OF A TWA TOUR-GROUP SCHEDULED TO VISIT JORDAN IN MID-
MARCH HAVE BEEN VAINLY APPLYING FOR VISAS AT JORDANIAN

CONSULATE IN NEW YORK, HAVING ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED THEIR APPLICATIONS BY MAIL ON DEC. 13 AND RESUBMITTED THEM ON JAN. 17. JORDANIAN CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK HAVE RECENTLY INFORMED THE SPIELBERGERS (THROUGH VISAS INTERNATIONAL, A SERVICE ORGANIZATION WHICH IS HANDLING THE TOUR-GROUP'S VISA APPLICATIONS) THAT THEIR APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN REFERRED FOR DECISION "TO AMMAN". THIS DELAY AND REFERRAL PROCEDURE APPARENTLY RESULTS SOLELY FROM FACT THAT MR. AND MRS. SPIELBERGER ARE JEWISH.

4. AS DISCUSSED WITH YOU DURING YOUR RECENT CONSULTATIONS HERE, OUR INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH JORDANIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS ON VISA MATTERS IN WASHINGTON OVER PAST MANY MONTHS HAVE PRODUCED ASSERTIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT GOJ REGULATIONS PRECLUDE ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PERSONS OF THE JEWISH FAITH. SOME OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE GONE SO FAR AS TO RECOMMEND THAT AMERICAN JEWS LEAVE BLANK THE SPACE IN THE JORDANIAN VISA APPLICATION FORM THAT PERTAINS TO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, AS MEANS OF CIRCUMVENTING THIS REGULATION. IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO RESOLVE PERIODIC DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY AMERICAN JEWS WHO APPLY FOR JORDANIAN VISAS IN WASHINGTON THROUGH INFORMAL CHANNELS, DRAWING ON OUR EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH JORDANIAN CONSUL HERE. WE HAVE NO SUCH CLOUT WITH JORDANIAN CONSULATE IN NEW YORK, ESPECIALLY ON THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN AMBASSADOR SALAH IS ABSENT FROM U.S.

5. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE FIND SUCH FOOTDRAGGING AND CONFUSION HIGHLY OBJECTIONABLE. THEY CLEARLY CONFLICT WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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THE UNDERSTANDING OUTLINED PARA. 2 REFTEL B, ACCORDING TO WHICH GOJ'S EXPRESSED POLICY IS TO ALLOW AMCITS TO ENTER JORDAN "WITHOUT REFERENCE TO RELIGION, BACKGROUND OR ANY OTHER GROUNDS THAT MIGHT BE ARBITRARY OR DISCRIMINATORY". SITUATIONS DESCRIBED PARAS. 2 AND 3 ABOVE SEEM TO INDICATE THAT JORDANIAN CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN U.S. ARE NOT AWARE OF THIS POLICY, OR AT LEAST ARE RELUCTANT TO IMPLEMENT IT IN CERTAIN INSTANCES.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR OBTAINING CONFIRMATION OR, IF NECESSARY, RECLARIFICATION OF GOJ VISA POLICY VIS-A-VIS AMCITS OF JEWISH FAITH, AS WELL AS GOJ ASSURANCE THAT ITS CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN U.S. ARE BEING APPRISED OF IT. IN PARTICULAR, WE HOPE JORDANIAN CONSULATE IN NEW YORK CAN BE ENERGIZED INTO ISSUING THE SPIELBERGER VISAS WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY. PLEASE ADVISE.

VANCE

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